University of Alberta

Davidson's Account of Metaphor: A Non-Linguistic Experience

by

Jennifer Stacey Runke

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master of Arts.*

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Abstract

Davidson's suggestion that metaphor should be understood as analogous to the Wittgensteinian notion of "seeing-as" has been criticised as being unable to provide the conditions necessary to maintain a distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances, and for being inconsistent with his rejection of metaphorical meaning. Contrary to Lynne Tirrell and Paul Taylor's interpretations of seeing-as, I argue that seeing-as can maintain the distinction while being consistent with Davidson's negative views of metaphor if seeing-as is understood on my "Contextual Model". On my contextual model, seeing-as refers to both the content of the metaphorical experience and to the way in which an audience determines an utterance to be metaphorical, namely by judging it in its context. By expanding Davidson's reference to seeing-as to include contextual judgements, Davidson's proposal offers an internally consistent and promising alternative to semantic approaches (including Max Black's interaction view of metaphor) to understanding metaphor.

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Introduction

Theorists have traditionally assumed that since metaphor is a feature of natural language, the proper object of study when inquiring into metaphor is language itself. The traditional approach to understanding metaphor is to study the interplay and changes of meaning that seem to occur within metaphorical utterances. The word "metaphor" literally means, "carrying something from one place to another, [or] transference",[1] and traditional theorists have occupied themselves with uncovering the semantic structures that cause this apparent movement. Recently there has been a trend away from a linguistic focus, replacing semantic structures with conceptual structures. Headed by theorists such as George Lakoff, this new approach studies and maps how metaphors affect changes in conceptual schemes and structures.[2] Although one approach focuses upon language, and the other upon concepts, they share the fundamental assumption that the content of a metaphorical utterance is different from the content of a non-metaphorical utterance. Thus the interpretation of an utterance is radically different depending upon whether the utterance is understood literally or metaphorically. It is assumed that this difference in content is caused by shifts between semantic (or conceptual) structures which can be analysed and systematized. Thus both approaches seek to systematize the structure of metaphor in order to understand how metaphors convey their distinct content.

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[1] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, Trans. with notes George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 222 fn.

[2] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Donald Davidson's seminal 1978 article, "What Metaphors Mean", argues against the assumption that metaphors have a special semantic or conceptual content that distinguishes them from literal language.[3] However, if metaphors neither have metaphorical meaning nor convey special cognitive content, then that leaves no semantic or cognitive structure for theorists to map. By arguing against the existence of metaphorical meaning and metaphorical cognitive content, Davidson is denying that metaphors can be understood via linguistic or conceptual analysis, and asserting that the traditional approach to understanding metaphor has been fundamentally wrong-headed. Although Davidson denies that metaphors have a metaphorical meaning, stating that the meaning of a metaphor is what the utterance literally means, he does not deny that metaphorical utterances are distinguishable from non-metaphorical ones. According to Davidson, metaphorical utterances provoke special experiences that most non-metaphorical expressions do not. Proponents of metaphorical meaning mistakenly read back their experiences into the meaning of the metaphor and to the intentions of the author. In place of these mistaken assumptions and their mistaken systematic approaches, Davidson suggests that metaphorical experiences should be understood along the same lines as the Wittgensteinian notion of "seeing-as", characterized by the duck-rabbit example. The duck-rabbit example is a drawing that can be seen as a duck and as a rabbit. While the object depicted is seen to alternate between being a duck and being a rabbit, the observer also sees that the picture itself remains the same. Thus, the viewer

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[3] Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," *On Metaphor*, Ed. Sheldon Sacks. (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1979) 29 - 46.

sees *that* the actual picture remains the same, while what the picture is seen *as* changes. Although Davidson suggests that we ought to understand metaphor as a seeing-as, he only provides hints as to what characteristics of metaphor can be understood in terms of seeing-as and does not provide a detailed analysis as to exactly how or in which way we ought to compare metaphor with seeing-as. Moreover, he does not say what potential benefits there may be if we understand metaphor according to the "seeing-as" model as opposed to the traditional semantic approach. This lack of clarification and explanatory promise, coupled with the extent of his attack against the tradition, have brought to Davidson's suggestion an onslaught of confused commentary and harsh criticism. My aim is to unpack and determine the explanatory worth of Davidson's appeal to seeing-as.

In chapter one, I will first briefly explain Max Black's interaction theory of metaphor in order to establish the tradition that Davidson is attacking. Although Davidson presents several arguments that echo Black's own concerns over previous semantic approaches, Davidson's chief objection against Black's theory, and semantic approaches in general, is that they do not avoid the possibility of paraphrasing metaphors in literal language. Although Black presents his theory as a theory that can account for the impossibility of literal paraphrase, Davidson argues that regardless of complexity, so long as the phenomenon is linguistic, the possibility of expressing the meaning of the metaphor remains. Instead, in order for paraphrase to be impossible, there must be some non-linguistic component to understanding a metaphor, and this element is likened by Davidson to a "seeing-as". After presenting Davidson's objections to the tradition, followed by a brief explication of Davidson's positive theory of metaphor, I will then

turn my attention to the objections of vagueness made by Max Black and Oliver Scholz, while focussing on the specific and more compelling objections levelled by Lynne Tirrell. Tirrell argues that there are two possible interpretations, the conceptual model and the perceptual model, with which we can understand seeing-as, and regardless of the interpretation, seeing-as does not offer a theory of metaphor that is consistent with Davidson's negative claims. On the conceptual interpretation, Tirrell argues, Davidson is committed to a linguistic foundation and thus contradicts his disavowal for the need of semantic analysis in understanding metaphor, and on the perceptual interpretation, Davidson does not provide the conditions necessary to distinguish between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language. Thus Tirrell presents the two main criticisms that this paper aims at rebutting, namely that Davidson's appeal to seeing-as as an explanatory tool in understanding metaphor can neither provide the conditions necessary to distinguish metaphorical from non-metaphorical utterances, nor can it escape having a linguistic foundation, and consequently does not avoid linguistic analysis.

In chapter two, I argue that although Tirrell's arguments are compelling against the interpretations that she presents, Tirrell presents a false dichotomy in her characterization of the content of seeing-as, and that a third alternative is presented by Paul Taylor in his paper "Insight and Metaphor".[4] In contrast to Tirrell's interpretation of seeing-as as being either essentially conceptual or essentially perceptual, Taylor argues that seeing-as is an experience that irreducibly involves both concepts and percepts. Although I will show that Taylor's construal of the content of the experience avoids the

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[4] Paul Taylor, "Insight and Metaphor," *Analysis,* 49.2 (1989): 71-7.

semantic foundation that was presupposed by Tirrell's conceptual model, I will ultimately dismiss Paul Taylor's theory of metaphor as explicating Davidson's because Taylor's additional thesis, namely that metaphors have aspects, is committed to metaphorical meaning. Instead, I will argue that contrary to Taylor's theory of metaphor, Davidson is committed to the view that metaphorical utterances are distinguished from non-metaphorical utterances according to contextual cues and not according to any feature that may be intrinsic to an utterance. Therefore, I will conclude the chapter by presenting my "contextual model" of seeing-as which follows G.N.A. Vesey's distinction between seeing-as under normal conditions and seeing-as under abnormal conditions. I shall argue that when the context in which an utterance is uttered is judged abnormal, this leads an audience to take the utterance as a metaphor. Thus, unlike Taylor's interpretation of seeing-as, under the contextual model, the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances is not due to any intrinsic feature of that utterance, but rather is a judgement based on the utterance's context.

After presenting the two main theses that comprise my contextual model, namely that seeing-as is an irreducible combination of percepts and concepts and that the distinction is based upon context and not the content of the utterance, in chapter three I set about defending Davidson from each of the objections that were levelled against the previous interpretations. I will first argue that an utterance's oddness coupled with contextual cues can provide for a practical distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances, and that this distinction does not depend upon any notion of metaphorical meaning. I will argue against the various charges of vagueness and vacuity

by establishing an accurate analogy between seeing-as and metaphor, such that a variety of phenomena, including the impossibility to paraphrase metaphor, are elucidated in the seeing-as model. Finally, I will turn to Tirrell's most serious objection, namely that seeing-as is committed to a linguistic foundation, and instead of relying on Taylor's unconvincing argument for seeing-as as being a non-linguistic experience, I position Wittgenstein's own construal of seeing-as to examine how the experience is in fact non-linguistic. Thus I shall argue that not only can seeing-as provide for the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances, but also that it is consistent with Davidson's rejection of both metaphorical meaning and the need for semantic analysis in understanding metaphor. Consequently, I will conclude that Davidson's appeal to seeing-as offers not only a viable alternative to traditional semantic approaches, but also that it promises to explain a variety of phenomena that traditional semantic approaches fail to capture.

Chapter 1: The Problem with Seeing-as

In this chapter, I will first establish the traditional approach to understanding metaphor by presenting Black's theory of metaphor. I will then turn to Davidson's objections against the tradition, followed by a brief explanation of his positive theory of metaphor, and conclude the chapter by positioning the criticisms levelled by Black, Scholz and Tirrell against Davidson's proposal.

§ 1.1 Max Black's Interaction View of Metaphor

Max Black's theory of metaphor characterizes metaphor as being successful combinations of interacting semantic structures and author's intentions. Black defines two main semantic structures that interact within a metaphor, the "focus" and the "frame".[5] The focus of a metaphor is the word or words that take on a non-literal, or metaphorical, meaning. The frame is the remaining words of the metaphorical utterance which keep their literal meaning. Black's example, "The chairman plowed through the discussion", has "plowed" as its focus and the remaining words as its frame. The word "plowed" is used within a context that it is not ordinarily associated with, namely a boardroom. If we understood "plowed" literally, then the utterance is absurd because the action that occurs within a boardroom is patently different than the action done by a farmer in her field. Understood metaphorically, "plowed" takes on a metaphorical meaning such that the utterance means something to the effect, but not entirely, that the

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[5] Max Black, "Metaphor," *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962) 28.

chairman forced his way through the discussion. Although the action in the boardroom may have similar characteristics to the farmer's action, the actions are not the same nor do they involve the same kind of objects. Thus within a metaphor, two dissimilar items or situations are brought together, where one acts as the frame or perspective through which another thing is seen or focussed upon.

Black presents two inadequate views, the substitution view and the comparison view, in contrast with which he presents his own interaction view as the better alternative. The substitution view of metaphor holds that "a metaphorical expression is used in place of some equivalent literal expression", and that an interpretation of a metaphor is its suitable literal paraphrase.[6] According to this view, metaphors are decorative adjuncts to literal language. A consequence of this view is that if metaphor is merely decorative, then literal language should be preferred in disciplines that aim for clarity and precision. Thus, according to this view, metaphor is not only superfluous to literal language, but it is also not preferred over its literal substitute in scientific or philosophic discourse. But if metaphors are merely decorative and can be literally paraphrased, then we would expect to be able to supply the literal equivalent quite readily. But metaphors are notoriously difficult to capture in literal language and different people often interpret metaphors differently. Since stating the meaning of a metaphor is not only difficult, but at times, seemingly impossible, the substitution view of metaphor does not seem to capture the phenomena of metaphor accurately. The comparison view of metaphor is a species of the substitution view. Theorists that hold the comparison view posit that "a metaphor

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[6] Black 31.

consists in the presentation of [an] underlying analogy or similarity", and that the metaphor can be interpreted as an implied analogy.[7] Black charges the comparison view with "vagueness that borders upon vacuity".[8] Metaphors often bring together two very dissimilar items or events (recall "plowed" and "boardroom") which may not share any literal similarity prior to the making of the metaphor. Thus the comparison view appears to mistake the similarities created by a metaphor with actual similarities that are pointed out by analogies, and consequently, mistakenly reduces metaphor to analogy.

Hoping to present a more attractive alternative theory, Black presents his interaction view of metaphor which holds that the frame and focus are not individual things but "systems of things" and "commonplaces".[9] By "systems of commonplaces" Black is referring to the variety of beliefs and ideas that are normally associated with an object.[10] Thus the interaction that occurs in a metaphor is between two ideas and their associated conceptual systems that are not ordinarily considered together. The interaction itself is the application of a set of implications which "selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principle subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject".[11] Black thinks that the inherent complexity that is involved in understanding a metaphor makes literal paraphrase impossible and is

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[7] Black 35.

[8] Black 37.

[9] Black 44.

[10] Black 40.

[11] Black 44-5.

reflective of the actual difficulty that is involved in interpreting metaphors. By asserting that metaphors cannot be literally paraphrased and asserting that the cognitive content of metaphors is something that cannot be captured in literal language, Black is defending metaphor's place in scientific and philosophical discourse. Although the fine nuances to a metaphor can not be conveyed through paraphrase, Black is confident that linguistic analysis and explication is a valuable resource, and the semantic structures outlined by him offer a model on which interpreting metaphorical utterances can be mapped.

§ 1.2 Davidson and the Tradition

Davidson offers similar objections to Black's against the substitution and comparison views of metaphor. A version of the substitution view of metaphor that Davidson presents is the view that certain words within a metaphorical utterance take on "new "extended" meanings".[12] These extended meanings are the result of combining the word's usual extension (or in other words, the set of items that is usually picked out by the word) with an item that is outside of the literal extension. What this "extended" extension picks out is a specific property shared by two dissimilar items. For example, according to this view, the metaphor, "Tolstoy is a moralizing infant", extends the extension of "infant" to include Tolstoy, and, in effect, applies the property "infanthood" to Tolstoy. But, since extensions are (or at least are part of) the meaning of words, and metaphors change a word's extension, then a new meaning of the word is created. However, if a metaphor only creates a new literal meaning of a word, then as Davidson

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[12] Davidson 32.

says, "to make a metaphor is to murder it".[13] That is to say, if metaphors extend the extensions of words, and a word's meaning is determined by its extension, then to make a metaphor is to create a new literal meaning for a word and not a metaphorical expression. This new meaning cannot be a metaphorical meaning because it does not preserve the original meaning from which it would be differentiated, but rather alters the original meaning of the word in its own creation.

In addition to the arguments against the substitution view of metaphor, Davidson offers objections to the comparison view of metaphor. Davidson's arguments echoes those of Black's own criticism, in particular that the comparison view suffers from vagueness due to the trivial observation that "everything is like everything".[14] As Black pointed out, metaphors bring together two dissimilar items which do not normally lend themselves to literal comparison. If metaphor could be paraphrased by a corresponding simile then "the hidden meaning of metaphor [would be] all too obvious and accessible".[15] But as Davidson notes, metaphors are typically difficult to interpret and seemingly impossible to paraphrase.

Although Black's own interaction theory of metaphor is designed to avoid the pitfalls of the previous theories while providing insights into the nature of metaphor, Davidson attacks Black's view for failing to avoid a major problem that Black himself cites. Black argued that metaphors cannot be paraphrased and had criticised the above

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[13] Davidson 32.

[14] Davidson 37.

[15] Davidson 37.

views for failing to realize the inherent complexity of metaphors. Davidson agrees with Black's observation that metaphors cannot be paraphrased, but does not agree that the complexity of "systems of commonplaces" avoids the possibility of paraphrase. Davidson wonders how if metaphor "has a special cognitive content, why should it be so difficult or impossible to set it out?".[16] Black's proposal is that metaphors trigger an interaction between systems of commonplaces, or in other words, an interplay between conceptual schemes. These conceptual schemes are essentially linguistic and are provoked by the metaphor in such a way that a specific organization of concepts is conveyed. Davidson argues that if a metaphor conveys a cognitive content, and this cognitive content is experienced by an individual, then regardless of how complex the content may be, the possibility exists that a particularly bright person may be able to paraphrase the metaphor. The problem with Black's theory is that he maintains that metaphor cannot be paraphrased while insisting that metaphor triggers a special cognitive content. This special cognitive content is essentially conceptual and linguistic. Although the nature of the content allows for the linguistic analysis that Black provides (in particular the semantic structures, the frame and the focus), the existence of the structure presupposes the possibility for paraphrase. Using Black's example, "The chairman plowed through the discussion", the system of commonplaces that are associated with "plowing" interact with the system of commonplaces associated with a boardroom discussion. The problem is that Black uses "systems of commonplaces" to refer to a network of ideas and beliefs, but ideas and beliefs are things that are expressible in language, that is to say, they are

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[16] Davidson 42.

intrinsically linguistic. Being intrinsically linguistic, only the complexity of the experience ensures that metaphors are not paraphrasable. But as Davidson rightly points out, complexity does not make paraphrase impossible. Paraphrase remains a possibility as long as the objects that comprise the experience are linguistic. Thus Black's theory does not rule out the possibility of paraphrase in his appeal to a complicated interaction between ideas and beliefs. In order to avoid the possibility of paraphrase, the experience that is provoked by metaphor must have some element that resists a linguistic equivalent. It is this aspect, an essentially non-linguistic aspect, that Davidson suggests is essential to experiences provoked by metaphor.

Consequently, Davidson argues against two main theses that permeate the tradition. The first targets the assumption that there is metaphorical meaning. The second targets the position that follows from that assumption, namely that the process for interpreting a metaphor is different than that for interpreting a non-metaphorical utterance. In place of these problematic theses, Davidson suggests that only literal meaning is necessary in understanding metaphor. Metaphors do not affect a transfer of meaning or conceptual content, but rather mean what they literally mean. Davidson does maintain, however, that there is a difference between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language and that metaphors do provoke audiences to have special non-linguistic experiences. It is this non-linguistic component to the experience that is supposed to explain why paraphrasing metaphors is impossible.

§ 1.3 Seeing-as

By using the term "seeing-as", Davidson means that a metaphor provokes an audience to "see one thing as another".[17] Seeing the object depicted in the duck-rabbit picture change from being a rabbit to being a duck while knowing that the drawing remains unchanged brings to light the distinction between seeing and seeing-as. Although we see *that* the picture remains unchanged, we see the picture *as* different objects, namely as a duck and as a rabbit. "Seeing-that" expresses some truth or fact about the world. "Seeing-as" does not express a truth or fact about the world, but rather reflects what we perceive and how we understand the world. According to Davidson, metaphor does not express truths or facts about the world, nor is the experience that is provoked by a metaphor essentially a "recognition of some truth or fact".[18] Rather, metaphor inspires an audience to see something in a new way, or in other words, to see it *as* something else.

Davidson's suggestion that we should understand metaphor according to Wittgenstein's notion of seeing-as has come under fire by many critics and commentators. One of the most animated critiques levelled against Davidson's positive theory of metaphor has come from Max Black in "How Metaphors Work: A Reply to Donald Davidson".[19] Black understands Davidson's positive view of metaphor as being

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[17] Davidson 45.

[18] Davidson 45.

[19] Max Black "How Metaphors Work: A Reply to Donald Davidson," *On Metaphor*, Ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979) 181 -192.

equivalent to the premise that "a metaphor producer is drawing attention to a resemblance between two or more things".[20] From this construal, Black charges Davidson's theory as being reducible to the comparison view of metaphor, a view that he has shown earlier to suffer from vacuity. However, Black's most serious objection is that "while rejecting current views, [Davidson's theory] supplies no insight into how metaphors work and fails to explain why the use of metaphors seems to so many students of metaphor an indispensable resource".[21] Thus, in addition to the vacuity suffered from being the comparison view of metaphor, Davidson's theory, as it is presented by Black, does not even offer an explanation of the phenomena that the traditional comparison view could.

Another critic of Davidson's positive view is Oliver Scholz.[22] Scholz also attributes a comparison view of metaphor to Davidson by citing Davidson's claim that "a metaphor makes us attend to some likeness between two or more things".[23] One of the problems that Scholz outlines concerning this view is that by appealing to likeness, the directionality of metaphors is left unexplained. When two items share a likeness, the relation is symmetric. Metaphor, in contrast, is an asymmetric relation. That is to say, while a likeness is reciprocally shared between two objects, a metaphor likens one object to another without asserting anything about that other object. The example Scholz offers

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[20] Black, "Reply"186.

[21] Black, "Reply"189.

[22] Oliver Scholz,""What Metaphors Mean" and how Metaphors Refer," *Reflecting Davidson: Donald Davidson Responding to an International Forum of Philosophers,* Ed. Ralf Stoecker (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993) 161 - 171.

[23] Scholz 164.

is the metaphor, "Richard is a gorilla". Although the metaphor may be asserting that Richard shares some likeness with a gorilla, it is not stating that gorillas are like Richard. Scholz suggests that Davidson's reference to seeing-as may explain the asymmetry, but he ultimately dismisses seeing-as because "the unexplicated notion of 'seeing-as' is not any clearer than metaphor itself".[24] Thus, Davidson's proposal of seeing-as is dismissed due to vagueness.

Both Black and Scholz object to Davidson's proposal due to its seeming vacuity and vagueness. In response, Davidson attempts to explain what he meant by "seeing-as":

> I thought Wittgenstein and others had made the notion of seeing-as clear enough to make their (and my) point: there are important experiences that cannot be reduced to one way or another of grasping propositional content.[25]

Although Davidson is attempting to clarify his position, several confusions persist. Firstly, Davidson's appeal to the clarity of Wittgenstein's thoughts on seeing-as does not in itself provide an explanation because the section in the *Philosophical Investigations* where seeing-as is addressed is notoriously difficult. Secondly, Davidson's appeal to the contributions of "others" offers no further clarification to the notion of seeing-as because although many theorists have dealt with seeing-as, many of their treatments are mutually

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[24] Scholz 165.

[25] Donald Davidson, "Reply to Oliver Scholz," *Reflecting Davidson: Donald Davidson Responding to an International Forum of Philosophers*, Ed. Ralf Stoecker (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993): 173.

incompatible.[26] Lastly, and most importantly, Davidson does not explain why some experiences are irreducible to grasping propositional content, nor does he discuss the importance of these experiences. Thus seeing-as, as it is presented by Davidson, remains unexplained. Since Davidson does not provide further elaboration as to how seeing-as can provide a model on which we are to understand metaphor, attempts have been made to provide an interpretation of 'seeing-as'. Lynne Tirrell offers two possible interpretations of seeing-as and argues that both interpretations, when applied to metaphor and juxtaposed with Davidson's negative claims, commit Davidson to an untenable position.

§ 1.4 Tirrell's Objections to Seeing-as[27]

Davidson maintains that some experiences, in particular, metaphorical experiences, are irreducible to grasping propositional content, and that these types of experiences ought to be understood as a seeing-as. Lynne Tirrell offers two interpretations of seeing-as, both of which attempt to explain how a metaphorical experience can be irreducible to grasping a propositional content.[28] Tirrell objects to the tenability of either of these models of seeing-as, arguing that regardless of interpretation, seeing-as does not

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[26] I have in mind Charles Burlingame (1965), Norman Russell Hanson (1958) and G. N. A. Vesey's (1965) conflicting remarks of the nature of seeing and seeing-as, in particular their differing views on how the distinction is maintained and whether all seeing is in fact a seeing-as.

[27] Similar objections are made by Neville Kemp in "Metaphor and Aspect-Perception," *Analysis,* 51. 2 Ed. Peter Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991): 84 - 90.

[28] Lynne Tirrell, "Seeing Metaphor as Seeing-As: Remarks on Davidson's Positive View of Metaphor," *Philosophical Investigations*, 14.2 (1991): 143- 154.

provide the framework necessary to support Davidson's claim that metaphor provokes non-linguistic experiences.

The two models, the conceptual model and the perceptual model, assumes a distinction between epistemic seeing and non-epistemic seeing. Non-epistemic seeing is a "bare perceiving", in which no object is particularly noticed anymore than anything else from the landscape.[29] In contrast, attending to and seeing that an object is a particular kind of thing sets an object apart from its landscape. This latter type of seeing requires that we have a concept of the object prior to being able to pick that object out in a landscape. Thus, as a precondition to picking out an object as an instance of a type, we must "be able to say what counts as evidence for a claim that something is [an instance of the object] and to be able to say what follows from that claim".[30] In other words, in order to see an object as a particular kind of thing we must have the necessary propositional content for the concept of that object. Thus if to see a chair in this epistemic sense, then not only must we have an awareness of a chair, but we also have to know what counts as evidence that something is a chair, and we must be able to say what follows from that claim, namely that the thing can be sat upon. Assuming this distinction between epistemic and non-epistemic seeing, Tirrell argues that if we are to understand "seeing-as" as an epistemic seeing, whereby we notice object X as an instance of object Y, then we must have concepts "X" and "Y" so that we can see X as Y. On this conceptual model, the experience of a metaphor is irreducible to a single propositional content

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[29] Tirrell 144.

[30] Tirrell 147.

because it essentially involves an interrelation between two propositional contents. Or in other words, the effect of a metaphor is relational between two items, the relation itself being irreducible to a single propositional content. Although, on this interpretation seeing-as can explain to some extent why some experiences are irreducible to grasping a propositional content, it ultimately fails because it only involves concepts. Tirrell argues that since the perceptual noticings that are inspired by metaphors presuppose concepts and since concepts are intrinsically linguistic, then Davidson's "appeal to noticings fails to stave off a linguistic analysis since we need that analysis to explain the possibility of noticings in the first place".[31] In other words, although Davidson rejects the notion that an expression is made metaphorical by virtue of semantic structures, he supports a view that depends upon the semantics that is inherent in concepts. Thus, Davidson has not avoided the need for semantic analysis if his usage of seeing-as refers to an epistemic seeing or noticing.

Tirrell offers an alternative interpretation that aims to avoid the apparent inconsistency of Davidson's joint rejection and admittance of linguistic analysis within his theory of metaphor. Tirrell suggests that perhaps Davidson meant "seeing-as" literally, in that the audience is prompted to literally see one thing as another.[32] Under this interpretation, the utterance, "Juliet is the sun", does not provoke the audience to think that the speaker is making a perceptual error, but rather provokes the audience to think

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[31] Tirrell 147.

[32] Tirrell 148.

that the speaker is saying something false.[33] The false assertion, in some contexts (for example, during a play), will provoke an audience to *see* one thing as another. The audience, upon hearing "Juliet is the sun" in the context of a play, is inspired to see Juliet as the sun. Although the cause of the provocation is linguistic, the audience is not provoked to compare and contrast concepts. The provoked experience is essentially perceptual, wherein the audience sees one percept as another percept. According to the above example, the audience literally sees "Juliet" as the "sun", such that the total experience is the effect of the relation between the two percepts. Thus, on this model, metaphors provoke an experience that is essentially perceptual. As conceived on this perceptual model, these experiences are irreducible to grasping propositional content because the experience is purely perceptual. That is to say, since the experience does not involve concepts, then the experience is not intrinsically linguistic. Therefore, the perceptual model avoids the semantic foundation that the conceptual model presupposed.

Although the perceptual model avoids the conceptual model's problem of inconsistency, it too proves to be inadequate as a model for metaphor. Tirrell offers the example of someone saying, "notice all the reds in the sunset", which if interpreted literally and under the proper circumstances will lead the audience to see the sunset as red.[34] Since this expression provokes the audience to see one thing (the sun) as another (red), this expression should be a metaphor according to the perceptual model of seeing-as. However, the expression, "notice all the reds in the sunset", would not normally be

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[33] Tirrell 148.

[34] Tirrell 149.

considered to be a metaphor. Thus the effect of *seeing* something as another, as posited on the perceptual model, does not provide the conditions necessary to maintain a distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language that reflects our common conception of metaphor. In order for a theory of metaphor to be adequate, it must allow for the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language to reflect actual linguistic practices, such that only those utterances that are normally considered metaphorical are also considered metaphorical within the theory. Since a theory of metaphor must be able to provide for this distinction, and the perceptual model fails to provide such conditions, Davidson's suggestion of seeing-as, as construed on the perceptual model, is an inadequate theory of metaphor. Moreover, the effect of seeing-as, as posited on a conceptual model, leads to inconsistencies within Davidson's theory of metaphor. Therefore, Tirrell concludes, seeing-as does not provide an adequate framework on which we are to understand metaphor.

Chapter 2: Redefining Seeing-as

The two interpretations of seeing-as that were offered by Tirrell were found not to provide Davidson with a tenable theory of metaphor. Tirrell's conceptual model of seeing-as interprets the objects that comprise a seeing-as experience as concepts, which, during a seeing-as experience, combines into a complex relation. As a relation, the experience is irreducible to one simple concept or propositional content. Although the model attempts to avoid the possibility of paraphrase by stipulating that the experience is an effect of a relation between two concepts, it does not avoid a linguistic base because concepts are intrinsically linguistic. As we have seen earlier, Davidson recognized that if the experience of metaphor is linguistic, then the ability to paraphrase a metaphor remains possible. Thus, if seeing-as is a relation between two concepts, and is consequently an experience that involves language, then it is inconsistent with Davidson's insistence that it is impossible to paraphrase a metaphor. More importantly however, is that if the experience of a metaphor is linguistic, then the need for semantic analysis reemerges, which is contrary to Davidson's claim that semantic analysis is an inadequate tool for understanding metaphor. Thus, if seeing-as is interpreted according to the conceptual model, then it is inconsistent with Davidson's rejection of semantic analysis. Tirrell's alternative interpretation, the perceptual model, is also found unable to provide Davidson with an adequate model for metaphor. The perceptual model interprets the objects of the seeing-as experience as being two bare, or non-epistemic, percepts. Since many non-metaphorical utterances can make an audience see one thing as another, seeing-as as an experience of bare percepts cannot offer the framework necessary to maintain the

distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances. Although the problems associated with each of these interpretations are valid, they miss their intended target and do not provide a fatal blow to Davidson's proposal. Tirrell assumes that seeing-as is an experience that is comprised of either a relation between percepts or a relation between concepts, without entertaining a third possibility, namely that the experience is comprised of a relation that involves both concepts and percepts. I propose that seeing-as is irreducibly an experience that involves both concepts and percepts, and that to attribute either of the interpretations offered by Tirrell misrepresents Davidson's position.

In this chapter, I will present Paul Taylor's theory of metaphor, arguing that although he accurately describes the kind of experience metaphor provokes, he does not explicate Davidson's position and is committed to problems that Davidson's theory, if understood on my proposed contextual model, avoids.

§2.1 Paul Taylor's Interpretation of Seeing-as

In this section I will present Taylor's theory of metaphor, focussing on his explication of "seeing-as" as being the combination of an organizing concept and percepts, and demonstrating how his interpretation avoids the problems of Tirrell's suggested interpretations.

According to Taylor, concepts are necessary in the experience of seeing-as, or alternatively, "aspect-perception". Aspect perception, the phenomena of seeing one thing as another, involves two concepts, namely the concept that is necessary to perceive an

object as a type of thing and a concept that organizes only some of the percepts of the object so that an aspect of that object is seen. Features, or aspects, are not bare percepts, such as shape or colour, but require a concept because aspects are seen as an representation of a type of object. In the duck-rabbit example, the viewer must have the concept "duck" and the concept "rabbit" so they can see the picture as a duck and as a rabbit. Thus, like objects, aspects are conceptually organized percepts. By focussing on only some of the available percepts, an aspect of an object "dawns". The dawning of an aspect is the experience that occurs, when, upon viewing an object, a certain feature of the object that was previously unnoticed becomes noticed. The peculiarity of aspect-perception is that while the object is seen to remain physically unchanged, how we see the object or what we see the object as changes depending upon which aspect of that object we happen to focus upon. Since the aspect which is seen is not an actual instance of an object but rather only resembles that object, a similarity is seen between two visual organizations, namely the present visual organization and the visual organization of which it is seen as. Thus, in aspect perception at least two organizing concepts must be involved, so that one concept is needed to pick out the object and another concept to which a similarity is seen. Or in other words, an individual must recognize a similarity between the present visual organization and an organization of another type of object. However, like all perception, aspect-perception requires percepts. When we see an aspect, we literally see the aspect. We do not conceive that the object has a certain kind of aspect, but rather we first see the aspect and by seeing the aspect, we know that the object has that aspect. Thus, aspect-perception does require background concepts that are

necessary to pick out objects (and aspects), but it also requires percepts because we actually perceive the aspect.

Although concepts are involved in aspect perception, and concepts are intrinsically linguistic, Taylor thinks that their involvement does not entail that the experience *as a whole* can be expressible in language or reducible to a belief. Taylor, following Davidson, uses "insight" to describe the effect of aspect-perception as being a source of knowledge while being non-propositional, or alternatively, non-linguistic. Upon perceiving an aspect of an object, the perceiver experiences an "insight" that is "irreducibly sensory".[35] By stipulating that the experience is "irreducibly sensory" Taylor is denying that the involvement of concepts within the experience entails that the experience is reducible to a propositional content or belief. Taylor argues that insights are irreducible to belief by contrasting the experiences had by an aspect-blind person and an aspect-perceiver upon looking at a building in Kennedy Airport that is built in the design of a bird taking off for flight. In the first case, the person is directed to see the bird-aspect of the building, knows that the building is intended to have a bird-aspect, but fails to see it. In the second case, the person looks at the building, sees the bird-aspect, but does not realize that the building was intended to be a representation of a bird. Taylor argues that perceiving an aspect is not equivalent to the belief that the object has that aspect because the aspect-perceiver can experience the bird-aspect without having the belief that the building is intended to be seen as a bird. However, even if the aspect-perceiver did believe that the building was intended to have a bird-aspect, the belief that

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[35] Taylor 76.

the building has a bird-aspect does not exhaust the knowledge that the aspect-perceiver has acquired upon viewing the aspect. The aspect-perceiver can make aesthetic judgements or comparisons. The aspect-perceiver would know that the building "manages to combine an appearance of stability with the suggestion that is rests lightly on the ground", as well as have the ability to "appreciate [that] the building architecturally is best seen from such and such an angle".[36] However, the aspect-blind individual, although having the belief that the building is a representation of a bird, does not have access to the knowledge necessary to make these aesthetic judgements. Taylor argues that regardless of the number of aesthetic judgements that are taught to the aspect-blind individual, the aspect-perceiver would still be able to answer questions that the aspect-blind, if remaining aspect-blind, could not. This seemingly endless store of knowledge is what Davidson refers to as "open-endedness" and is due to the "irreducibly sensory" quality of aspect-perception.[37] Thus, no one belief or series of beliefs can capture the vast store of knowledge that is available to the aspect-perceiver, and consequently, Taylor concludes, insights are not reducible to belief.

The open-endedness of aspect-perception is also used to demonstrate that insights gained via aspect-perception are inexpressible in language. Since the content of the aspect-perceiver's awareness could never be fully spelt out to the aspect-blind individual, the experience of aspect-perception is inexpressible. Thus Taylor concludes, the combination of thought and percepts are such that "no articulated thought or combination

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[36] Taylor 76.

[37] Davidson, "Metaphors" 44.

of them could give the full content of the resulting awareness".[38] That is to say, although a concept is used to organize the percepts, the total effect - an insight - is irreducible to a propositional content and inexpressible in language. Thus, seeing-as is an experience comprised irreducibly by percepts and concepts, and although knowledge is gained from aspect-perception, it is neither reducible to beliefs or expressible in language.

Taylor likens the experience of seeing-as, as an irreducible combination of percepts and an organizational concept, to the experience that is provoked by metaphor. As he says:

> Similarly, a metaphor can organize a complex subject matter into an illuminating constellation, an awareness of which can never be fully spelt out in words. They cannot be spelt out because, as Davidson says, 'much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character'.[39]

Thus, a metaphorical experience is a combination of percepts and concepts, such that the non-propositional aspects (or percepts) of the experience are essential to that experience and are inexpressible. It should be noted that although the visual cases of aspect-perception are the most accessible examples, neither aspect-perception nor metaphor are limited to visual percepts. "Seeing-as", according to Taylor, when applied to metaphor does not mean that we literally see one thing as another during a metaphorical experience. Instead, "seeing-as" refers to being aware of a certain aspect that the metaphor calls to our attention. However, like visual aspect-perception, the success of a metaphor depends

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[38] Taylor 76.

[39] Taylor 76.

upon whether the object has the aspect that the metaphor asserts, "without which it is unable to elicit its intended response".[40] Thus, metaphors are like aspect-perception because they elicit insights which are essentially non-linguistic and non-propositional, and like aspect-perception, the success of a metaphor depends upon whether the object that it describes really has the aspect. Consequently, if a metaphor does describe an object's aspect, which is then perceived by an audience as an inexpressible insight, then no literal paraphrase is possible for metaphor. More importantly, since metaphor is like aspect-perception, in that it provokes an inexpressible experience, then metaphor cannot be fully understood via semantic analysis.

By denying that insights (or noticings) are linguistically expressible, Taylor's interpretation of seeing-as avoids a semantic foundation. Seeing-as, as conceived on the conceptual model, is a relation between two concepts, such that it is a noticing of one thing in terms of another. The conceptual model failed because its semantic foundation contradicts Davidson's disavowal of metaphorical meaning. According to Taylor, although seeing-as involves noticing an aspect of an object, the aspect that is noticed does not become subsumed into a concept but remains irreducibly sensory. Taylor's stipulation that seeing aspects is irreducible to belief maintains an experiential quality to the experience, and this experiential aspect provides the ground on which several features of metaphor that Davidson identifies can be explained, in particular, its open-endedness, while avoiding a commitment to a linguistic foundation.[41]

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[40] Taylor 75.

[41] I will discuss these features of metaphor in more depth in the following chapter.

In addition to avoiding the conceptual model's failing, Taylor's interpretation provides conditions that distinguishes metaphorical from non-metaphorical utterances. In order for an utterance to be found metaphorical, the utterance must be intended to point out an aspect of an object, the object referred to by the metaphor has the aspect and the utterance elicits its intended response, namely that an audience sees the aspect of the object. Since aspects are not bare percepts, Taylor's formulation of metaphor does not succumb to the perceptual model's failing. That is to say, utterances such as "notice the reds in the sunset" would not be considered metaphorical because, unlike perceiving aspects, perceiving red does not require an organizing concept. Nor is the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances based on the subjective experience of any one individual. Instead, a community of art critics and experts being more sensitive to metaphorical aspects can serve to distinguish between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances. Therefore, Taylor's interpretation of seeing-as avoids the problems of the conceptual and perceptual models offered by Tirrell.

§2.2 Kemp's Rejection of Aspect-Perception

Neville Kemp, a proponent of metaphorical meaning, argues against Taylor's theory of metaphor. Kemp thinks that Taylor's theory is the product of "following Davidson's hints",[42] and inferring that the problems of Taylor's theory also apply to Davidson's, Kemp concludes, "aspect perception is only of the most peripheral interest

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[42] Kemp 84.

for the theory of metaphor".[43] After briefly explaining Kemp's arguments against Taylor's theory of metaphor, I will argue that his objections focus on Taylor's claim that utterances are metaphorical if and only if they describe an actual aspect of an object and successful when an audience perceives that aspect.

Kemp argues that if aspect-perception is to be a useful explanatory tool for metaphor, then the accuracy of the analogy should be established by showing independently that that which is true of aspect-perception is also true of metaphor.[44] According to Kemp, the accuracy of the analogy is particularly important in Taylor's version of seeing-as because he claims that all metaphors are involved with aspect-perception, such that a "metaphor is successful *only if* the aspect is there".[45] That is to say, Taylor's theory distinguishes between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language by claiming that metaphors refer to actual aspects of objects and the aspect that is being referred to really dawns on aspect-perceptive people. But, Kemp argues, the "aspects" of metaphor and the "aspects" of objects are fundamentally different. Aspect-perception occurs when a visual stimulus sufficiently duplicates a certain visual organization and the perceiver becomes aware of the likeness. Metaphor, on the other hand, is not limited to one sense modality, such as in the metaphorical expression, "a loud colour", where the metaphor involves both sound and visual aspects. Nor is metaphor limited to sense modalities, but rather can draw together an abstract concept with a sensible object, as in

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[43] Kemp 90.

[44] Kemp 85.

[45] Taylor 75.

Kemp's example, "deep-rooted prejudice".[46] Thus, aspect-perception occurs along one sense modality, whereas metaphor can and often does cut across sense modalities. But, Kemp argues, if the aspects that comprise a metaphorical experience are not the same kind of aspects that comprise aspect-perception (i.e. visual), then the analogy between aspect-perception and metaphor, in regards to "having aspects", proves to be inaccurate. And although analogies typically do not have to be exactly accurate for them to be adequate, Taylor's claim that all successful metaphors have aspects commits this analogy to a stricter standard. Visual aspect perception is limited to objects that can be perceived, but metaphors can refer to abstract objects or concepts. Metaphors that describe an aspect of an abstract object do not literally have the same kind of aspect that an actual object has, namely physical features. Nor are the features of abstract objects seen by focussing on a specific set of percepts as is the case during visual aspect-perception. Thus, Kemp concludes, the analogy between aspect-perception and metaphor fails because the aspects that are described by metaphors are often quite different than the aspects that are seen in aspect-perception.

In place of the literal interpretation of "aspect", Kemp offers that perhaps metaphors only metaphorically have aspects. Under this interpretation, instead of literally *perceiving* the aspect of a metaphor, we actually *conceive* the aspect of a metaphor. Thus, according to this interpretation, metaphors only metaphorically involve aspect-perception. However, if this is the case, then the explanatory worth of aspect-perception becomes null. For if we cannot explain seeing-as independently from metaphor, "the notion could

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[46] Kemp 86.

only be another name for metaphor, and not an explanation of it".[47] Thus, Kemp concludes that regardless of interpretation, aspect-perception does not provide a rich explanatory tool for metaphor.

In addition to the charge that aspect-perception does not provide a rich explanatory tool for metaphor, Kemp argues that Taylor's conditions for distinguishing metaphorical utterances from non-metaphorical utterances is at the expense of a common understanding of metaphor. In particular, Kemp thinks Taylor's theory of metaphor is inconsistent with the notion that the aptness of a metaphor is dependent upon the metaphor's relation to its subject, being committed instead to the notion that the aptness of a metaphor depends upon the experience had by its audience. Taylor claims that aspects exist independently of the mind, wherein an individual in a particular frame of mind is able to perceive an aspect of an object. But according to Kemp, the inherent subjective quality of the experience of perceiving a metaphor's aspect assumes a distinction between aspect-perception and the phenomena of "image projection". Image projection is the experience of imagining an image on something that does not actually have the image. Kemp offers the example of Leonardo da Vinci instructing his students to look at a wall until they saw battle scenes.[48] Although the students are seeing images, they are not perceiving an aspect of the wall, but rather imagining and projecting these images upon the wall. The problem that this poses for metaphor is that since we only have our experience of the aspect as evidence for an utterance being a metaphor, then there

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[47] Kemp 87.

[48] Kemp 89.

must be some way to judge when the utterance actually describes an aspect or when we are imagining that the utterance is describing an aspect. Taylor distinguishes aspect-perception from image projection by emphasizing the objective qualities of aspect-perception, and the subjective qualities of image projection.[49] The intention of an author or creator as well as inter-subjective agreement that the object really exhibits the aspect are both required in aspect-perception, whereas the image seen in image projection is neither an intended aspect, nor would the same image be shared among people. Although this distinction is not inherently problematic, it does bring out the subjective quality of Taylor's characterization of metaphor. Kemp rightly points out, that although an apt metaphor is ordinarily determined by judging its fidelity to its subject, according to Taylor's theory, the aptness of a metaphor appears to depend upon the people who have those experiences.[50] Or alternatively, understanding a metaphor for Taylor depends upon whether we have the experience of a metaphor, but it seems that we can understand metaphors without ever experiencing an irreducibly sensory insight. Taylor's conditions for metaphorical utterances appear too subjective and unreflective of our intuitions of what makes a metaphor successful. Thus, although Taylor attempts to provide the conditions necessary to distinguish between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances, Kemp concludes that Taylor does so at the expense of a widely accepted and intuitive understanding of metaphor.

I think that Taylor's theory of metaphor is vulnerable to Kemp's two main

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[49] Taylor 73.

[50] Kemp 90.

criticisms because Taylor makes the conditions for the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances intrinsic to the content of the utterance. Kemp's first objection targets Taylor's claim that the content of a metaphorical utterance determines whether an utterance is metaphorical. Since Taylor claims that it is necessary for a successful metaphor to refer to an actual aspect of an object, and offers only visual aspects as explanation for what a metaphorical "aspect" is, Taylor commits himself to a direct correlation between aspect-perception and metaphor. Since the aspects that comprise a metaphor are different than those aspects that comprise visual perception, the analogy fails. Kemp's second objection targets Taylor's other condition for metaphor, namely that understanding a metaphor is equivalent to seeing the aspect referred to by a metaphor. The problem with Taylor's construal of the experience of a metaphor is that he makes the meaning of a metaphor about our subjective experience and not about what the metaphor says about the world. Thus, both of Kemp's objections are founded upon Taylor's conditions for metaphor, namely that an utterance is a successful metaphor if and only if the utterance describes an actual aspect and an audience, by hearing the metaphor, can see the aspect.

In addition to the problems outlined by Kemp, by making the conditions of metaphor consist of features of an utterance's content, Taylor is also committed to metaphorical meaning. Taylor's claim that metaphors have aspects rephrases the traditional belief that metaphors have a metaphorical meaning. Whatever Taylor is referring to by "aspects" when applying it to metaphor assumes that there is some trait that metaphorical utterances have that non-metaphorical utterances do not. This trait, call

it "metaphorical meaning", a "special cognitive content," or "aspect", distinguishes between two types of utterances, those that are literal and those that are metaphorical, by positing some feature that is unique to metaphors. However, it is this type of distinction, a distinction based upon the content of the utterance, that is rejected by Davidson. If an utterance is made metaphorical due to some quality inherent in it, then since the qualities inherent in utterances are linguistic, that quality can be understood better via semantic (or conceptual) analysis . Since Davidson argues against metaphorical meaning, claiming that there is only literal meaning, Davidson is denying that there is any quality that is inherent within an utterance that determines that the utterance is a metaphor. Thus Davidson's conception of metaphor is essentially different from Taylor's construal of metaphor and is not reducible to Taylor's, and consequently I shall argue, avoids the problems outlined by Kemp.

Although Taylor's construal of the objects that comprise a metaphorical experience is representative of Davidson's own view of metaphor, Taylor's theory is fundamentally different because he thinks that the content of a metaphorical utterance differentiates metaphorical utterances from non-metaphorical ones. Because Davidson rejects the notion that some feature intrinsic to an utterance makes the utterance a metaphor, his likening of metaphor to aspect-perception is not in regards of any shared intrinsic feature that would serve to distinguish metaphorical from non-metaphorical utterances, or alternatively, seeing from seeing-as experiences. Although Davidson does refer to the content of the experience of metaphor as being like the content of the experience of seeing-as, he also says that many types of speech can produce the same

effect.[51] Thus, as opposed to Taylor, Davidson is not committed to any direct correspondence between the aspects that comprise aspect-perception and the aspects involved in metaphor, nor is he committed to the view that metaphors have aspects. In order for Davidson to be able to account for the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances while rejecting metaphorical meaning, something external to the content of the utterance must be involved. And if Davidson's usage of "seeing-as" is consistent with his rejection of metaphorical meaning, then the analogy between metaphor and seeing-as should not be limited to offering an explanation of the content of a metaphorical experience, but should also include an explanation of how something external to the content, namely its context, is involved in distinguishing metaphorical utterances from non-metaphorical utterances.

§ 2.3 Seeing-as in Context

Since the content of one's experience cannot be used to distinguish between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances, the conditions for the distinction must be contextual. In order to understand the relationship between seeing-as and judgement, and how this relation could aid in understanding metaphor, I will briefly explain Vesey's distinction between seeing-as under normal conditions and seeing-as under abnormal conditions by focussing on the apparent problem that it sought to avoid.[52]

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[51] Davidson, "Metaphors" 45 fn.

[52] G. N. A. Vesey "Seeing and Seeing-as," *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing,* Ed. Robert J. Swartz (Berkeley: University of California,1965) 68 - 83.

Judgements of perception can be either true or false. Examples of perceptual judgements include, "That is a door" and "I see a door", as well as, "I think it is a door" and "I see it as a door". The perceptual judgement, "I see a door", identifies an object in the world, and is true if the object that is being referred to is actually a door. In contrast, the perceptual judgement, "I see it as a door", is not identifying anything in the world, which can later be confirmed or denied, but rather is describing one's experience. Vesey argues that the difference between stating what the object is that is within one's perceptual field (i.e."That is a door") and describing one's experience of perceiving the object ("I see it as a door") is not due to any difference in the content of the perception, but rather is due to a difference in the context under which the perception is taking place.

Vesey argues against the view that the content of perception consists of sense data, proposing instead that the contents of perception are objects. On the sense datum model, people perceive bare percepts and are infallible because we can only perceive what is actually present before us. In order to make a perceptual judgement, we use the sense data as evidence for our judgement, and since our judgement can be mistaken, our judgements of perception are propositional. The problem that Vesey presents against the sense datum model is that it fails to provide an adequate explanation of why certain thoughts, and not others, are entertained about an object. Sense data are bare percepts of particular shades of colour and exact shapes, which serve as evidence for our thoughts about the object. But we can think of an object as merely green and not necessarily peacock green, and sometimes we do not even notice the colour of an object. According to Vesey, by insisting upon the immediacy of sense data, sense datum theorists cannot

explain why some qualities of an object are noticed while others remain unnoticed. Therefore, sense data cannot explain perceptual attentiveness. Thus, Vesey concludes that since "attention is a necessary condition of perceptual awareness", and sense data cannot explain attentiveness, sense data cannot be the content of our perception.[53]

As opposed to sense data, Vesey argues that the content of our perception are objects. Instead of seeing colour patches, people perceive *objects* and the various qualities, like shape and colour, are seen as attributes of the object. The content of perception is comprised of both the concept under which the perceptual experience is organized and the experiential quality of the experience. Thus for Vesey, all perception involves concepts, such that we literally perceive what an object is, or in other words, "all seeing is seeing-as".[54] If the content of our perception are objects, which presupposes concepts, then no perception is immediately "given" and infallible.[55] Since we can be mistaken as to what we are perceiving, perception can be either true or false. A perception is true when, "what on looking at it the person would take it to be if he had no reason to think otherwise, is what the object is; false otherwise".[56] Thus, a perception is true if the content of the perception matches the object in actuality.

On Vesey's proposal, the content of a perception does not determine whether an

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[53] Vesey 81.

[54] Vesey 72.

[55] Although Vesey's argument for "all seeing is a seeing-as" is unconvincing, I include it here because his distinction between seeing-as under normal conditions and seeing-as under abnormal conditions is pertinent later.

[56] Vesey 73.

individual would state, "It is an X" or whether she would describe her perception, "I see it as an X". In both cases the perceiver sees an object, and while the content of the perception in both cases are the same, the conditions, or context, of the perception differ. Under normal conditions (such as, adequate lighting, being in close proximity to the object, or sobriety) an individual would state, "It is an X". However, under abnormal conditions, such as seeing an unfamiliar object, an individual who is doubting the accuracy of his perception describes his perception, "I see it as an X". Thus, according to Vesey, judgement is involved in perception insofar as it determines the reliability of our perception, and is not involved in seeing what an object looks like. Therefore, according to Vesey, although seeing may be a seeing-as, there are two types of seeing-as, seeing-as under normal conditions and seeing-as under abnormal conditions.

Seeing something as an object, although comparable to aspect-perception, is not its equivalent. Aspect-perception is the experience of seeing an aspect of an object that resembles the visual organization of another object. Aspect-perception is a case of seeing-as under abnormal conditions because, although people do not doubt that the object really has the aspect, they do not think that the object is what they perceive it to be. That is to say, although the aspect-perceiver would want to say that the object has a bird-aspect, she would not say that the building is a bird. Davidson's likening of metaphor to seeing-as captures Vesey's formulation of experience and applies it to language. Vesey claims that there is essentially only one type of seeing, namely seeing-as. Davidson likewise claims that all language is literal. Although all seeing is a seeing-as, Vesey argues that people judge the reliability of their perception according to conditions under

which the observation is made. Davidson also argues that the conditions, or context, in which the utterance is spoken is used to judge whether an utterance is metaphorical. As Davidson observes, "absurdity or contradiction in a metaphorical sentence guarantees we won't believe it and invites us, *under proper circumstances*, to take the sentence metaphorically".[57] These "proper circumstances", as well as an utterance's oddness, prompt people to look for hidden implications and judge the utterance to be metaphorical. Thus, like Vesey, Davidson posits that the context and not the content of the utterance provoke a metaphorical effect.

Therefore it is on this interpretation, "the contextual model", that I will explicate Davidson's usage of "seeing-as" as a model for metaphor. I have shown that, unlike Taylor's theory of metaphor, Davidson's disavowal of metaphorical meaning entails that he also rejects the view that the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances is due to some intrinsic feature of an utterance. Instead, I propose that Davidson's usage of "seeing-as" not only refers to a type of experience, but that it also refers to how we judge an utterance to be metaphorical, namely on the basis of its context.

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[57] Davidson, "Metaphors" 40.

Chapter Three: Evaluating Seeing-as on the Contextual Model

§3.1 Avoiding Metaphorical Meaning

In this section I will show that the context in which an utterance is made can determine whether an audience will take the utterance literally or as a metaphor, and consequently, that the seeing-as model of metaphor is not committed to metaphorical meaning.

As we have seen, Taylor's theory of seeing-as is committed to metaphorical meaning because he locates the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances in the content of the utterance. If the utterance is metaphorical, then the metaphor refers to an aspect of an object. And if the metaphor is successful, then the audience will see the aspect in the object that is being referred to by the metaphor. Thus, metaphors predicate aspects of objects, and objects really have those aspects that are predicated of them. However, by asserting that a metaphor states some fact about an object, such that the object actually has the aspect that is predicated of it by the metaphor, Taylor is committed to metaphorical meaning. Since an object, for example, a chairman, does not literally plow through discussions, the metaphor, "The chairman plowed through the discussion", cannot be understood literally. According to Taylor, there is some aspect of "plowed" that is an action that a chairman does to a discussion, and if the metaphor is successful, the audience will see that aspect. But Taylor is merely substituting "metaphorical meaning" with "aspect" and does not avoid metaphorical meaning. There is no substantial difference between Taylor's claim that "plowed" has some aspect that is applicable to discussions and the claim that metaphors invoke

extended meanings because in both cases a new sense of "plowed" must be invoked to make any sense of the utterance. Discussions are patently not something that can be literally plowed. Thus, in order to maintain the truth of the utterance, a metaphorical meaning must be attributed to "plowed". By asserting that metaphors predicate aspects of objects, and objects really have those aspects, Taylor is committed to metaphorical meaning.

In order for a theory not to presuppose metaphorical meaning, the theory must deny that a metaphorical utterance predicates aspects of objects. Or more generally, utterances cannot be judged metaphorical on the basis of the utterance's content. Instead, an utterance must be found metaphorical independently of its content, and the content of the utterance, or that which is predicated of the object by a metaphor, does not refer to actual aspects of the object. I will deal with each supposition in turn.

According to Davidson, the content of the utterance does not determine whether an utterance is to be taken as a metaphor or as a literal assertion. The defining conditions of some linguistic practices depend primarily upon the context in which they are uttered and not their specific content. Lying, for example, is a linguistic practice that is distinguished from truth telling, not by its content, but by its context. An utterance is a lie when a speaker, asserting the truth of some proposition, believes that what he is asserting is actually false.[58] Although it is often the case that lies do in fact state something false (because people do not usually believe in false sentences), they do not necessarily have to state a falsehood. The defining feature of lying is that the speaker misrepresents what he

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[58] Davidson, "Metaphors" 41.

believes to be true. Thus, it is not the content of the utterance (its truth) that determines when an utterance is a lie, but rather its context (in this case, the belief of the speaker).

Similarly, the content of a metaphor does not determine whether an utterance is a metaphor. It is often the case that the object of a metaphor does not have the property that is predicated of it by the metaphor.[59] For example, not only is it false that Juliet is the sun, but it is patently false and absurd to think that she may be literally the sun. Davidson thinks that the patent falsity or, in some cases, the triviality of the utterance is "odd enough to prompt us to disregard the question of literal truth".[60] So, when we hear Romeo claim, "Juliet is the sun", we do not think that Romeo has made a perceptual error, nor do we think that Romeo is a terrible liar, instead, the oddity of the sentence, in this case, the patently falsity of the utterance, prompts the audience to look for hidden implications. That is not to say that the patent falsity or the triviality of the utterance determines that the utterance is metaphorical, because truth and falsity comprise the content of the utterance. Instead, if we apply Vesey's account of seeing-as as being a judgement of contextual conditions to metaphor, we see that an audience *judges* that the truth is trivial, or alternatively, *judges* that the utterance is absurd, and it is the judgement that the utterance is odd or absurd that provokes the audience to seek out hidden implications. Thus although metaphors are typically false, the falsity of the utterance does not determine whether we will take the utterance as a metaphor. Instead, we judge that the obvious truth or falsity of the statement is odd, and believing that the speaker would

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[59] Davidson, "Metaphors" 40.

[60] Davidson, "Metaphors" 40.

not usually say patently false or trivially true statements, we take the sentence metaphorically.[61] Thus, for Davidson, metaphors are not identified according to the content of the utterance, but rather identified according to the oddness of the utterance, or more generally, according to the abnormal conditions in which the utterance is made.

Although I will not proceed to itemize the contextual conditions that serve to trigger an audience to take an utterance as a metaphor, I think that there is potential to identify certain common contextual factors that underlie an audience's judgement. There are abnormal contextual cues that, in conjunction with a patently false or trivially true statement, prompts an audience to take a sentence metaphorically, such as the setting of a play, a poem or the speaker making a peculiar look. However, I think we should follow Max Black's advice not to insist on too strict a set of conditions because, "we must beware of attributing to [metaphor] stricter rules of usage than are actually found in practice".[62] Thus, although a formal definition of metaphor may be preferred, the conditions or rules that serve for the definition of metaphor should be reflective of the dynamic or creative nature of metaphor and consequently, we should not impose a stricter distinction than is found in practice. Accordingly, I think that contextual conditions and cues can provide for this distinction.

Assuming that the context can serve as the basis for the practical distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language we do not have to rely upon the proposition that metaphors predicate, and objects exhibit, aspects. Instead, by supposing

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[61] Davidson, "Metaphors" 40.

[62] Black "Metaphor" 29.

that an utterance is taken metaphorically on the basis of a contextual judgement, the content of the utterance merely serves as a trigger or as a prompt, and does not assert anything true about the object. For example, "Juliet is the sun", does not assert that Juliet has some property that is ordinarily associated with "sun", but rather means "Juliet is the sun", which is false and is judged to be an absurd statement. The oddness of the statement prompts the audience to take the sentence metaphorically, that is to say, to seek out hidden implications, and notice a variety of similarities and contrasts. Thus, although in hearing "Juliet is the sun" an audience may come to think that Juliet is warm and brightens Romeo's world, the utterance does not mean or express any of those qualities attributed to Juliet. Therefore, the content of a metaphorical utterance only serves to prompt an audience to seek out implications, and does not attribute any metaphorical "aspect" to an object. Moreover, the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical language can be construed without positing metaphorical meaning as its defining feature. Thus, Davidson avoids Taylor's commitment to metaphorical meaning.

§3.2 Establishing an Accurate Analogy Between Seeing-as and Metaphor

In this section, I will position the contextual model's interpretation of seeing-as against Kemp's objection that seeing-as does not provide an accurate model for metaphor.

Arguing against Taylor's theory of metaphor, Kemp questioned the accuracy of the analogy of seeing-as to metaphor. Kemp argued that the type of aspects that comprise a visual experience cannot be the same type of aspects involved in a metaphor because

metaphorical aspects are not necessarily visual. Thus, if metaphorical aspects are not literally the same kind of aspects involved in visual aspect-perception, then metaphors can only metaphorically have aspects. And if that is the case, then aspect-perception is only another name for, and not an explanation of, metaphor. Davidson's theory avoids Kemp's criticism because Davidson does not claim that the content of the utterance determines the content of a metaphorical experience. For Davidson, the content of the metaphorical experience is fundamentally independent of the content of the utterance. That is to say, the content of the metaphorical experience that may be had from hearing the utterance, "Juliet is the sun", is not determined by the utterance's meaning. Nor is Davidson committed to Taylor's view that the content of a metaphorical utterance has the same kind of content as aspect-perception, namely aspects. For Davidson, an utterance that is taken metaphorically does not predicate actual aspects of objects, but rather only serves as a trigger for a metaphorical experience. Thus, Davidson's theory does not depend upon any direct correlation between the objects of visual aspect-perception and the aspects which are noticed during a metaphorical experience.

Instead of any direct correspondence between the seeing-as and metaphor, Davidson uses the analogy of seeing-as to *describe* the type of experience that is had when someone experiences a metaphor. I think several features of a metaphorical experience that are emphasized by Davidson can be elucidated on the model of seeing-as, in particular: the effect that a metaphor has on an audience, the open-ended quality of that experience, and the precondition that the audience has the necessary background concepts. I will describe in turn each feature of metaphor on the model of seeing-as.

Davidson refers to the experience of metaphor in a variety of ways. According to Davidson, metaphors make us appreciate certain facts about the world, not by expressing those facts, but by "intimating", "inspiring", "calling to attention", and "leading us to notice" those facts.[63] As we have seen, the facts that a metaphor makes an audience notice are above-and-beyond the patent falsity of the utterance. For example, suppose that an audience observes (among other facts) that 'Juliet provides warmth in Romeo's life' from the utterance, "Juliet is the sun". The proposition that 'Juliet provides warmth in Romeo's life' is not contained in the literal meaning of "Juliet is the sun". That is to say, there is nothing within the content of the utterance that expresses that 'Juliet provides warmth in Romeo's life'. Thus, the facts that are noticed by the audience are extraneous to the content of the utterance. Having facts called to one's attention is different from noticing facts via interpretation, and this difference can be understood by contrasting the two.

The "dawning of an aspect" is the experience of becoming aware of an aspect.[64] The duck-rabbit example illustrates the phenomena of an aspect dawning. Upon viewing the outline drawing of the duck-rabbit, we perceive that the organization of lines in the drawing, or the "picture-object", remains constant. However, what we see the picture as, assuming that we first saw the picture as a rabbit, changes from being a rabbit to being a duck. The perceiver sees that the picture can be seen as two different objects, and the objects that the picture is seen as can alternate. Wittgenstein observes that although a

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[63] Davidson, "Metaphors" 33ff.

[64] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe 3rd ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1968) 194e.

person may describe her experience, "It changed from duck to rabbit, and now it is a duck!", she would not be able to describe how she made the different aspects dawn. That is to say, she would not be able to recall how she shifted her gaze or effected the change of aspect.[65] From this observation, Wittgenstein argues that the change of aspect is not caused by the perceiver's eye movement, nor is the change controlled by the perceiver. Although she may be concentrating on the duck-aspect in the picture, what she sees the picture as may still change back-and-forth between the two aspects. Thus, what she sees the picture as appears uncontrolled by the viewer. A similar phenomenon can also be observed when an aspect dawns for the first time. Although a person may focus on an aspect, for example the bird-aspect of the Kennedy building, that person may remain aspect-blind, whereas a person who happens to glance at the building may be able to see the aspect without previously knowing that the building can be seen to have a bird-aspect. Thus, it would appear that the dawning of an aspect and the changing of aspects occurs independently of the intention of the perceiver.

Interpreting an image presents a sharp contrast to the dawning of an aspect. Wittgenstein offers the example of an illustration of a 3-dimensional rectangular object to illustrate what is involved in interpretation. We are to suppose that the same illustration is repeatedly presented in a textbook, but each instance of the illustration is accompanied with text referring to the picture as depicting various objects, such as a glass box, an inverted open box, or a wire frame.[66] In each case, a specific interpretation of the

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[65] Wittgenstein 199e.

[66] Wittgenstein 193e.

illustration is provided and the reader sees the picture as the object that the text refers to it as. Although it is true that we see the picture as a different object each time this is not the same kind of experience as was the dawning of an aspect in the duck-rabbit drawing. A person does not have to be told that the picture is a duck to see the picture as a duck, nor do they have to be told that the picture can be seen as two different animals to be able to see both of the aspects. However, if a writer wants her audience to see a rectangular object as being a representation of a specific object, then she does have to provide the interpretation to which it can be seen. Although the difference between seeing the rectangle as a specific object and seeing the duck aspect in the duck-rabbit picture involves a difference in the degree of ambiguity, the primary difference between the two experiences is that we have to imagine the box as being representative of the specified object, but in the case of the duck-rabbit picture, we do not have to imagine anything. The picture clearly depicts a duck. If no interpretation was provided by the textbook, the reader would have to hypothesize as to what object the 3-dimensional rectangle is representing. Thus, Wittgenstein characterizes interpretation as the forming of hypotheses, " which may prove to be false".[67] In order to form an hypothesis, we have to actively engage the material, conceive of possible interpretations, and determine which interpretation appears most likely. Thus, interpretation appears fundamentally intentional, whereas the dawning of an aspect occurs regardless of intention. Therefore, although interpretation appears to be a thought process, the dawning of an aspect more closely resembles perception.

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[67] Wittgenstein 212e.

If metaphors had metaphorical meaning, then we would expect that interpretation would be the primary process in which the meaning of the metaphor is achieved. However, according to our thesis, metaphors do not *express* the facts noticed by an audience, but rather *inspires* the audience to notice certain facts. Thus we should expect that the experience of metaphor closely resembles the dawning of an aspect. That is to say, a metaphorical experience should appear non-intentional, such that it should seem closer to a perception rather than a conclusion to a rational thought process. I think that we do understand metaphors in a similar way as a dawning of an aspect. Like the person who knows that the Kennedy building has a bird-aspect, an audience's knowledge that the utterance is a metaphor does not necessarily lead to an understanding of a metaphor. For example, an art critic may identify an utterance to be a metaphor, explain what the metaphor prompted them to notice, and yet the student can remain clueless as to the "meaning" of the metaphor. Alternatively, even if someone did not know that an utterance was intended to be metaphorical, they may still be able to notice certain facts that lie beyond the utterance's literal interpretation. Moreover, when we do understand a metaphor, we cannot lay out the logical steps that we took in understanding the utterance nor can we explain a method for someone else to take. Understanding a metaphor does seem to be independent of the listener's will. Thus, the way we seem to experience metaphors reflects what we would expect if it were like a dawning of an aspect and not like an interpretation. Thus seeing-as, and in particular, the dawning of an aspect can provide a model on which the kind of process that is involved in understanding a metaphor can be construed and understood.

A second feature of a metaphorical experience that can be elucidated by seeing-as is its "open-endedness". An experience is open-ended when no amount of description could capture all of the details of the experience. Davidson asks how many things are drawn to one's attention when someone "mentions the beauty or deftness of a line in a Picasso etching".[68] Davidson observes that there would be no end to the things that you may want to mention. When someone mentions the beauty or deftness of a line in a Picasso etching, they are using language to direct your attention to a particular aspect. Although someone may use language to direct your attention to some particular feature, their direction does not determine what you will see. Although you may focus on a particular fact, for example the beauty of the line, there are countless other facts that are also seen, such as the line's relation to another, the line's relation to that of the picture of a whole, the fidelity of the picture to that which it is depicting, and so on. When we attend to our perception, there are a countless number of aspects that we can notice, compare and contrast. According to Davidson, any use of language can inspire an open-ended experience, and metaphor is merely one example.[69] Metaphor directs an audience's attention to a particular aspect of an object in a similar way as mentioning the beauty of a line in a Picasso etching, namely not by describing that which is to be seen, or in other words, not by providing the interpretation with which the object is to be seen, but rather by pointing to that aspect.

A third feature of metaphor that can be elucidated on the model of seeing-as is the

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[68] Davidson, "Metaphors" 45.

[69] Davidson, "Metaphors" 45 fn.

role of concepts. The ability to understand metaphor presupposes the involvement of concepts in two ways. A person must have the concepts (and language ability) necessary in order to understand the literal meaning of an utterance, and they must also have a variety of concepts that comprise the diverse facts that the metaphor prompts them to notice. Thus, in the example, "Juliet is the sun", a person must have the concept "sun", they must know that "Juliet" refers to a person, and they must know what follows from those terms, namely that people are patently not suns. In addition to having the concepts necessary to understand the utterance, if they are to understand the metaphor, they must have a large number of other concepts. If they notice that Romeo thinks that Juliet brightens up his life, or provides warmth, from the utterance, "Juliet is the sun", then they must have the requisite concepts, "brighten", "warmth" and "Romeo", to name just a few. Thus, concepts are essential in understanding a metaphor. However, the involvement of concepts does not entail that seeing-as fails to provide an accurate analogy. In order to see the duck aspect of the duck-rabbit picture, the viewer must know what counts as a duck. That is to say, they must have the concept "duck" in order to see something as a duck. The way we view the world is influenced by the concepts that we have. For example, if someone saw a picture of a rabbit but they had no concept of "rabbit", then if they were asked to describe what they saw, they would not say, "I saw two ears, two hind legs ...", but rather "I saw two long appendages ...". Thus, we would be unable to see the picture as a rabbit if we were not acquainted with the shape of the animal.[70] Therefore, in order to understand metaphor, the audience must have the appropriate background

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[70] Wittgenstein 207e.

concepts.

Contrary to Kemp's objection, seeing-as and metaphor do appear similar in a number of important ways. Firstly, the way we understand metaphors appears more analogous to the dawning of an aspect than it is to an interpretation. Secondly, the open-endedness of a metaphorical experience is like the open-endedness of visual perception in that in both cases there does not seem to be an end of things to which we could direct our attention. And lastly, both experiences require necessary background concepts in order for the respective experience to "dawn". Although seeing-as can provide a model on which all of these features of metaphor can be construed, traditional semantic approaches cannot. Although a semantic approach is able to explain the need for background concepts, they do not provide an adequate explanation of either the way in which an audience experiences a metaphor, nor how metaphors can provoke open-ended experiences, or to use their own language, why metaphorical language cannot be translated into a literal paraphrase. Semantic approaches cannot provide an convincing explanation for the impossibility of paraphrase as long as they maintain that the experience is essentially linguistic. Semantic approaches seeking to systematize metaphor into categories, such as the "frame" and "focus", attempt to explain why metaphors cannot be paraphrased by supposing complex interrelations between concepts. However, as Davidson rightly points out, the possibility for paraphrase remains regardless of the degree of complexity. Moreover, according to a semantic approach, understanding a metaphor should require an interpretation that unpacks the metaphorical meaning that is intrinsic to the utterance. But as we have seen, understanding a metaphor does not appear

to be a rational construction of hypotheses, but rather that it seems to "dawn" on us. And finally, although semantic theories can account for the need of background concepts as a precondition to metaphor, seeing-as can also provide for this precondition. Thus, although it has yet to be shown that seeing-as is not committed to a semantic foundation, seeing-as can provide a model on which the main features of metaphor can be elucidated and with the potential for providing new insights.

§3.3 Seeing-as is a Non-Linguistic Experience

In this section, I will show that seeing-as is not committed to a semantic foundation, and consequently, that Davidson's theory of metaphor is not committed to metaphorical meaning nor to the need for semantic analysis.

Tirrell argued that since seeing-as presupposes background concepts, and concepts are intrinsically linguistic, then if metaphor is like seeing-as, then it is a linguistic phenomenon, thus concluding that Davidson has not escaped the need for semantic analysis in his appeal to seeing-as. I agree with Tirrell that background concepts are necessary for both the comprehension of the literal utterance and the ability to notice the various aspects to which the metaphor directs our attention. However, as Taylor rightly points out, the involvement of concepts does not entail that the experience, as a whole, can be expressed in language. Taylor characterizes the type of knowledge that is gained via aspect-perception as an "insight" which is "irreducibly sensory". Seeing the bird-aspect of the Kennedy building leads to a countless array of beliefs about the object that the aspect-blind individual does not have access to even though that individual may know

that the building has a bird-aspect. Taylor uses the fact that the experience is open-ended as evidence for aspect-perception being irreducible to a belief. Since a perceiver could not describe all of the nuances of their experience, Taylor concludes that insights are irreducible to belief. Thus, concepts are combined with percepts in such a way that the experience as a whole cannot be reduced to any propositional content.

I agree with Taylor's construal of the seeing-as experience as being an irreducible combination of concepts and percepts, however, his reasoning for this remains unconvincing. Taylor had argued that the open-endedness of the experience was evidence of the irreducibility of the experience to a propositional content. Although it is true that the open-endedness of the experience is a result of being inspired by a metaphor, it is not the primary reason why metaphor escapes linguistic analysis. Davidson himself says that the difficulty is more fundamental than not being able to "provide an exhaustive catalogue of what has been attended to in a new light. What we notice or see is not, in general, propositional in character".[71] In other words, although being unable to list the numerous items that are brought to our attention by a metaphor suggests that there may be a non-linguistic or non-propositional aspect to our experience, it is not conclusive evidence for this non-linguistic aspect. In order for paraphrase to be impossible, there must be some aspect that is essentially non-linguistic and indescribable. It is this property of being indescribable that Davidson's appeal to Wittgenstein is supposed to illustrate. Thus, I will explain how the experience of metaphor is essentially indescribable by following Wittgenstein.

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[71] Davidson, "Metaphors" 45.

Wittgenstein uses the duck-rabbit example not only to illustrate the difference between seeing-that and seeing-as, but also is an example of a dawning of an aspect, which Wittgenstein argues is an experience that is indescribable. "I see a duck" and "I see it as a duck" reports a person's perception, the former under normal conditions, the latter under abnormal conditions. However, if you were asked to describe the change of aspect, no such description presents itself. If you were trying to describe the change of aspect, you may point to pictures of rabbits and ducks in succession, or say, "I first saw a rabbit, but now I see it as a duck". In both instances however, you would be describing two successive perceptions and not the change of aspect. Perhaps a clearer example is seeing a likeness. If you see a likeness between two faces and you were asked to describe what the likeness is, you may refer to the similar size of nose or draw two identical faces, but "still [you] have drawn two faces, and no likenesses".[72] We cannot draw or describe a change of aspect or likeness because there is no object to draw or describe. Wittgenstein argues that the experience is indescribable not because it is due to it being a private visual impression which cannot be shown to anyone, but rather because no object whatsoever is involved.

Wittgenstein argues that if we were experiencing a visual impression, then we would expect to be able to describe the experience. We can describe our visual impressions, such that we can report that we saw the duck-rabbit picture as a rabbit, and yet our visual impressions are private (no one really knows for sure that I did indeed see

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[72] J.F. M. Hunter, "Wittgenstein on Seeing and Seeing-as," *Philosophical Investigations*, 4.2 (1981): 35.

the picture as a rabbit). Thus, although the change of aspect may be a private visual impression, it is like all of our other experiences and consequently, we ought to be able to describe it like any of our other experiences. But we cannot describe our experience of the change of aspect like we report our other perceptions. A further reason why seeing a change of aspect cannot be explained as a private visual impression is that we also see that the picture itself does not change. If it were the case that all we saw were visual impressions, then we would not be able to see that the picture itself remains constant. Thus the object that comprises our experience of seeing a change of aspect is not a inner visual impression. Instead, Wittgenstein argues that since no describable object comprises our experience we are unable to forward any description that may deepen our understanding of what it is to see a change of aspect.[73] However, if the uniqueness of seeing a change of aspect or having an aspect dawn was only that it lacks a describable object, then seeing a change of aspect could be explained along the same lines as having a feeling. Having a pain or a pang of guilt are undoubtably experiences, but they also are not comprised of a describable object. Although someone may say that his stomach hurts or that his stomach is in knots, he would be at a loss for words if asked to describe what it is to feel pain or guilt. And although he may be able to provide definitions for "pain" or "guilt", he is merely clarifying those concepts and is not offering a further description as to what it is to feel pain or to feel guilt. There is no object to describe, and nothing further that could be said that would offer any further clarification as to what it is to feel pain. Seeing a change of aspect seems to be different than having a feeling even though

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[73] Wittgenstein 196e.

feelings may accompany the occurrence. For example, although someone may feel surprised when they see a change of aspect or may feel satisfied when they place a name to a familiar face, the surprise or satisfaction is not what it is to see an aspect or to recognize someone. We feel surprised *because* we saw a change of aspect, and alternatively, we are satisfied *because* we 4recognized someone. The feelings are the effect of and not the experience of these phenomena.

Seeing a change of aspect is not the same as having a feeling because not only can the experience be thought to occur without the feeling but also that seeing a change of aspect requires concepts, whereas having a feeling does not. Although we literally *see* something when we see a change of aspect, we need concepts, such as "duck" and "rabbit", in order to see the change of aspect in the first place. Thus the experience is partly perceptual and partly conceptual. Consequently, seeing a change of aspect is characterized as being an experience that cannot be described because it lacks an object to describe, and although it presupposes concepts, it is a perceptual experience. Thus we should resist equating seeing a change of aspect with having a feeling.

A unique feature of experiencing a change of aspect or the dawning of an aspect is that upon seeing the aspect the perceiver becomes "ready to go".[74] Being "ready to go" refers to the state of a perceiver, who, upon seeing the change of aspect, is able to do a variety of things that an aspect-blind individual remains unable to perform. For example, a person seeing the change of aspect will be able to report that the duck-rabbit picture has two aspects, and that the duck-aspect is looking one way and the rabbit-aspect is looking

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[74] Hunter 40.

in another direction. Having the ability to make these assertions does not mean that the perceiver will in fact make them, it only means that the perceiver, if so inclined, could make these assertions. Having an aspect dawn has the same kind of effect. Upon looking at the Kennedy building and seeing the bird-aspect, you could make a countless number of observations, aesthetic judgements or musings that the aspect-blind individual, if they remain aspect blind, could never make. The inability to provide an exhaustive catalogue is not because an infinite number of aspects have been noticed by the aspect-perceiver. People do not necessarily notice several things when an aspect dawns, let alone an infinite number of things. When an aspect dawns, the perceiver becomes able to make a countless number of judgements, observations or connections. Thus, in order to describe our experience, we must have the requisite background experience, and this background experience is provided by the dawning of an aspect. The seeming endlessness of what we want to mention in describing our experience is not an intrinsic characteristic of the experience, but rather it is our ability to make countless observations that accounts for the seeming endlessness. In other words, all of the judgements and observations that can be made are because of the effect of having an aspect dawn and are not intrinsic to the experience of the dawning.

Although we may be able to list the types of things that the ability enables us to do, we cannot offer any further clarification of what it is to have the ability beyond merely refining our definition of "ability". The "ready to go state" that is the effect of the dawning of an aspect is the ability to make judgements and form beliefs. This ready to go state is not a subconscious state wherein a list of possible propositions can at some future

time be made conscious, but merely is the precondition for asserting those propositions. Thus, as an ability, the effect of seeing an aspect dawn is a non-linguistic experience. Moreover, the experience of seeing an aspect dawn or change is also non-linguistic because the experience lacks an object to describe. Therefore, both the experience of the dawning of an aspect and the effect of that experience (i.e. having an ability) are non-linguistic.

If the analogy between metaphor and seeing-as is accurate and seeing-as does not have a semantic foundation, then metaphor is not based on a semantic foundation. The effect of a metaphor, like the change of aspect, lacks a describable object. A description of the experience of being prompted, or inspired, by a metaphor is a description of the facts that the metaphor made us notice. But in that case, we are reading back what we have noticed into the initial experience. The inspiration of the metaphor remains indescribable. Moreover, the effect of the inspiration is also non-linguistic. The open-endedness of a metaphorical experience is due to the ability that is gained from the inspiration, and does not constitute the initial inspiration. Thus, since neither the experience of being inspired, nor the effect of that experience, namely the ability to form observations and judgements, are linguistic, seeing-as is not based upon a semantic foundation. Thus, by likening metaphor to seeing-as, Davidson is not committed to a semantic foundation.

Conclusion

I have presented Davidson's approach to understanding metaphor as an account that is primarily committed to the impossibility of literally paraphrasing metaphors. Contrary to Black's claim that complexity makes metaphorical utterances unparaphraseable, Davidson argues that the possibility of paraphrase persists so long as the phenomena is essentially linguistic. Thus if it is impossible to paraphrase a metaphor, then there must be some non-linguistic aspect in the understanding of that metaphor. Since this non-linguistic aspect cannot be captured by any semantic approach, Davidson suggests understanding metaphor as provoking an experience that is analogous to the non-linguistic experience of seeing-as, and it is this analogy that I have attempted to not only unpack, but also to demonstrate its explanatory promise.

To this end, I have argued that the previous interpretations offered by Tirrell and Taylor fail to accurately capture Davidson's own position, and I have presented the contextual model as a more charitable alternative to that of the previous interpretations. Contrary to Tirrell's understanding of seeing-as as being either essentially conceptual or essentially perceptual, I have argued alongside Taylor that seeing-as is an experience that involves a combination of both percepts and concepts. By insisting that the experience that is provoked by a metaphor is essentially irreducible to a propositional content, Taylor is attempting to avoid the linguistic basis to which Tirrell's conceptual model was committed. Although Taylor captures Davidson's main point that seeing-as is an experience that is irreducible to a propositional content, Taylor's interpretation is inconsistent with Davidson's rejection of metaphorical meaning. By arguing that there is

only literal meaning, Davidson is denying that metaphorical utterances are distinguished from non-metaphorical utterances by some feature intrinsic to that utterance's content. However, Taylor's claim that utterances are metaphorical if the content of the utterance ascribes an aspect to an object commits Taylor to metaphorical meaning. Thus, the interpretations offered by both Tirrell and Taylor fail to accurately explicate Davidson's view of metaphor because they present the conditions for the distinction as being intrinsic to the content of an utterance. Instead of judging the explanatory worth of seeing-as as a model for metaphor on their mistaken interpretations, I presented the contextual model. The contextual model expands Davidson's usage of seeing-as to include contextual judgements, such that the distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances is based upon an audience's judgement that the utterance is absurd, which in turn prompts them to take the utterance metaphorically. Thus, in contrast to the models presented by Tirrell and Taylor, the contextual model does not make the conditions of metaphor dependent upon some feature that is intrinsic to the content of an utterance.

After defining the two main theses that differentiates my contextual model from the previous interpretations, namely that the content of the experience involves both concepts and percepts and that the distinction is based upon context and not content, I argued that seeing-as, as it is construed on the contextual model, does not succumb to any of the previous interpretation's problems. By expanding Davidson's reference to seeing-as to include the context in which an utterance is uttered, Davidson avoids Taylor's commitment to metaphorical meaning. Moreover, by separating the conditions for the distinction from an utterance's content, Davidson avoids the problems that Kemp levels

against Taylor's theory of metaphor, while providing the conditions for a practical distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances. After establishing how the contextual model avoids the problems associated with Taylor's theory, I then explained how the experience of seeing-as is analogous to the experience of metaphor by demonstrating how three main features of metaphor (with particular focus on the open-endedness or unparaphraseability of metaphor) can be understood more completely on the seeing-as model than is offered by traditional semantic approaches. I then turned to the most serious objection Davidson's proposal faced, namely that seeing-as is a linguistic experience and does not avoid the need for semantic analysis as Davidson had claimed. By focussing on Wittgenstein's own discussion of seeing-as, I argued that not only is the experience of the dawning of an aspect non-linguistic, but also the effect of the initial experience, namely the ability to make countless observations and judgements, is also non-linguistic. Thus, I have shown that if metaphor is analogous to seeing-as, then metaphor avoids a linguistic foundation. And consequently, seeing-as can provide a model on which we can understand metaphor while being consistent with Davidson's disavowal of both metaphorical meaning and the need for semantic analysis in understanding metaphor.

By explicating Davidson's proposal in terms of the original discussion of seeing-as, Davidson's suggestion that metaphor should be understood analogously to a seeing-as gains not only plausibility, but also appears to present a viable alternative to traditional semantic approaches. The contextual model that I present allows for Davidson to maintain that there is a distinction between metaphorical and non-metaphorical utterances

while being consistent with his disavowal of metaphorical meaning. Although Davidson's proposal received a lot of critical attention, the problems of the previous interpretations have led most theorists to reject Davidson's suggestion as a viable alternative. However, by presenting an interpretation of seeing-as that not only avoids the problems of the earlier interpretations but also offers explanatory promise, I think that Davidson's suggestion should be reconsidered and reevaluated as a rival for traditional semantic approaches. Unlike traditional semantic approaches, seeing-as ensures and can explain why metaphors are impossible to paraphrase, and can capture how we understand metaphors more accurately by presenting a less systematized and a more descriptive account of metaphor. Although I am not advocating a complete abandonment of semantic analysis, I do think that it cannot fully explain metaphor. Instead, I think by widening the scope of inquiry to include how an utterance's context can influence how an audience will take that utterance will only lead to a deeper understanding of the complexity and creativity that underlies the diverse ways we use language. Thus, I think that seeing-as not only provides a model on which this broader understanding of metaphor can be construed, but also that it offers a new and promising perspective for understanding both metaphor in particular, and the connection between language and experience in general.

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